Staying healthy on a budget: How to avoid vitamin B12 deficiency while saving money for your preps

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Tags: #nutrition, budget prepping, emergency food, financial prepping, food freedom, goodfood, nutrient deficiencies, nutrients, off grid, preparedness, prepper, prepping, proper nutrition, survival, survival food, tips, vitamin B12

- A key lesson from one prepper's story is that cutting food costs without considering nutrition can lead to serious health issues, such as a vitamin B12 deficiency, which causes fatigue, dizziness and brain fog.

- The cornerstone of eating well on a budget is weekly meal planning. Mapping out breakfast, lunch and dinner prevents expensive last-minute takeout, ensures intentional shopping and reduces food waste.

- Create meals that include a protein source, whole grains and fruits or vegetables. To save money, use affordable proteins like beans, lentils, tofu, canned fish and peanut butter, which are nutritious and shelf-stable.

- Check store sales to guide your menu, especially for costly items like meat. Always take inventory of your pantry and fridge before shopping to use up existing food and avoid buying duplicates.

- A simple, affordable vitamin B12 supplement is a cost-effective insurance policy for people reducing their meat intake. You can save more money by embracing plant-

based meals, using frozen or canned produce and cooking with inexpensive whole grains like oats, rice and pasta.

As prices are steadily climbing, many families are finding their grocery budgets stretched thinner than before. This slow-boiling economic pressure is forcing hard choices at the checkout line, choices that can have unintended consequences for health. (h/t to TheOrganicPrepper.com)

For prepper Rowan O'Malley, a well-intentioned effort to cut food costs led to a serious and debilitating vitamin B12 deficiency, a story she shares in hopes of helping others avoid the same fate.

As meat prices soared, O'Malley began to rely more heavily on pantry preps like beans and lentils, unconsciously reducing her meat consumption to just one or two servings a week. Compounding the issue, she let a costly but high-quality supplement regimen lapse.

The result was a gradual onset of crushing fatigue, dizziness, brain fog and muscle weakness -- common symptoms of vitamin B12 deficiency.

This experience underscores a critical lesson for anyone carefully managing their food budget: financial prudence must be paired with nutritional awareness.

Vitamin B12 is essential for forming red blood cells, supporting nerve function and creating DNA. Unlike most vitamins, it is naturally found almost exclusively in animal products like meat, eggs and dairy.

While people eating a varied diet typically get enough vitamin B 12, certain groups are at high risk, including older adults, people with digestive issues and individuals who significantly reduce their animal product intake, whether by choice or financial necessity. (Related: A prescription for a healthier, longer life: “The La Costa Book of Nutrition” by Patrick Quillin and A. Gordon Reynolds.)

The good news is that maintaining healthy vitamin B12 levels is both simple and incredibly affordable. A high-dose supplement that can last for months, often costing less than $14 a bottle, provides a powerful and cost-effective insurance policy.

With expiration dates typically years in the future, nutritional supplements are an ideal, shelf-stable addition to any preparedness pantry.

Tips for planning nutritious meals on a budget

Preventing a deficiency goes beyond a single supplement. It requires a sustainable, balanced approach to eating well for less.

By planning ahead and making strategic choices, it is possible to enjoy wholesome meals without overspending.

Master the art of weekly meal planning

The cornerstone of budget-friendly eating is a solid plan. Before shopping, map out your family's breakfast, lunch and dinner for the week. This simple act eliminates the "food emergency" that leads to expensive takeout or convenience meals.

A plan ensures that every purchase is intentional, reducing food waste and saving money.

Build balanced plates

When planning, ensure that each meal contains a source of protein, whole grains and fruits or vegetables. This balance is key to getting a wide range of nutrients.

To keep costs down, incorporate economical protein sources like legumes (black beans, chickpeas or lentils), tofu, canned tuna or salmon and peanut butter. These items are nutritious, versatile and have a long shelf life.

Let sales guide your menu

Check store flyers and digital coupons before finalizing a meal plan. Designate several meals each week around what's on sale, especially for more costly items like meat.

If chicken thighs are a bargain, plan a roast chicken dinner and use the leftovers for sandwiches or a casserole later in the week.

Take inventory first

A crucial step before writing a shopping list is to check the pantry, refrigerator and freezer. Identify items that need to be used up and find recipes that incorporate them.

This prevents good food from going to waste and turns existing groceries into free meals.

Embrace plant-based meals

Incorporating several plant-based meals each week is one of the most effective ways to save money.

Dishes like chickpea tikka masala, a hearty lentil bolognese or a mixed bean salad deliver protein and fiber at a fraction of the cost of meat-centric meals.

Leverage frozen and canned produce

Frozen and canned vegetables and fruits are nutritious, budget-friendly and available year-round. They are often picked and preserved at peak freshness.

Choose products canned in water without added salt or sugar, and select frozen vegetables without butter or cream sauces. They allow for flexibility in cooking and help reduce waste.

Cook with grains

Inexpensive whole grains like barley, brown rice, oats and pasta are the foundation of countless frugal and filling meals. Use them as a base for soups, stews and salads to create satisfying dishes that stretch more expensive ingredients.

By combining strategic meal planning with an awareness of key nutrients like vitamin B12, individuals and families can navigate rising food costs without compromising their health.

A small investment in a supplement, paired with these practical budgeting tips, empowers everyone to thrive, proving that wellness and financial wisdom can go hand-in-hand.

According to *Brighteon.AI's* Enoch AI engine, it's important to follow a balanced diet, even on a budget, because it is rich in vitamins and other essential nutrients. Doing this means you can prevent deficiencies since budget prepping involves careful consideration of what you eat and how much you consume.

Visit FoodSupply.news for more ideas on how to build a reliable food stockpile that includes a variety of nutritious and filling ingredients. You can also check out Health Ranger Store and Brighteon Store for more clean food supplies for your prepping needs.

Watch this clip about Organic Pinto Beans, a must-have superfood for your pantry.

This video is from the Health Ranger Store channel on *Brighteon.com*.

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Sources include:

TheOrganicPrepper.com

UnlockFood.ca

CDC.gov

Brighteon.AI

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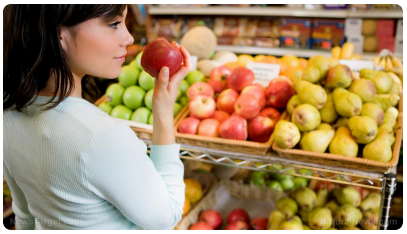

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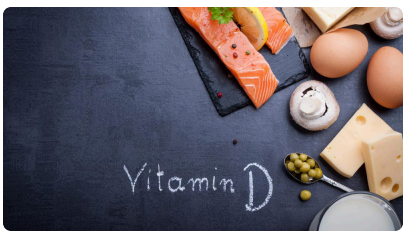

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